



Dear Physician,

Please refuse to prescribe the Premarin® family of drugs including Duavee®.

Hormone Replacement Therapy drugs derived from the high concentration of estrogen (conjugated equine estrogens or CEEs) in pregnant mare's urine (PMU) such as Premarin® and Prempro® are listed as "known human carcinogens" by the National Toxicology Program as well as the World Health Organization (WHO).

It is widely believed that the risks of taking these medications far outweigh the benefits offered as has been proven time and again through numerous studies and surveys, particularly the alarming NHLBI / NIH's Women's Health Initiative (WHI).

The Women

Several nationwide studies, most notably the NHLBI / NIH's Women's Health Initiative, have unmistakably linked the use of HRT to cancer, heart disease, stroke and dementia even in reduced dosages. While newer studies have tried to dispute these findings, there are still far more that support the WHI.

Women who take these drugs face significantly increased risks of: invasive breast cancer (26%), heart disease (29%), strokes (41%), blood clots to the lungs and legs (50%), ovarian cancer (60%), impaired cognitive function, dementia and Alzheimer's, asthma, lung cancer, malignant melanoma, and reduced insulin resistance, among others. With each passing day new evidence is uncovered that supports the consequences associated with the use of these CEE-derived HRT therapies.

Despite these findings, particularly in the case of Prempro® which has been widely credited as the cause of increased breast cancer rates, Pfizer continues to sell these hormone replacement therapies with approval from the FDA and other regulating bodies around the globe. Even taking estrogen alone increases a

women's risk of stroke as well as endometrial cancer and does not reduce their risk of coronary heart disease.

Yet more worrisome is the fact that these carcinogenic medications are available in the US and other countries without a prescription and therefore dangerously uncontrolled drugs.

In 2009, as part of an on-going lawsuit, a US District Court Judge granted a motion to publicize papers supporting the use of Prempro® and other derivatives of the Premarin® family of drugs written by non-accredited writers which were then "authored" by medical academics. Disturbingly these ghostwritten articles emphasized the benefits while diminishing the risks of using CEE hormone replacements.

Pfizer/Wyeth has lost the vast majority of Prempro® lawsuits it has faced since trials began in 2006 and has settled most of the claims filed out of court.

By late 2013, 95% of the lawsuits had been settled with expectations that Pfizer had recompensed an estimated \$1.6 billion to resolve these claims. In 2018 the lawsuits continue, yet Pfizer continues to market and sell these drugs to millions of vulnerable women. The lawsuits have consistently and repeatedly shown that Wyeth (now a division of Pfizer) failed to adequately warn consumers about the risks of these drugs and purposely hid the risk of breast cancer and other diseases.

Most disconcerting, in January of 2012 Pfizer announced its intent to seek U.S. regulatory approval to sell the combination osteo-menopausal drug Aprela®. "Limited" studies on Aprela®, a combination of bazedoxifene (Viviant®) and CEEs in the same concentration as Premarin®, have shown to decrease some of the risks associated with the Premarin® derivatives.

Despite that bazedoxifene, a selective estrogen receptor modulator or SERM, has been unsuccessful in receiving approval from the FDA as a result of increased risks of stroke and thromboembolic events, in October 2013 the FDA granted approval for the sale of Aprela®, now re-labeled Duavee®.

Duavee® became available to the marketplace in February, 2014.

Regardless of the claims that these two compounds have a synergistic outcome and mitigate the side effects of each other, this is nonetheless unsettling on both accounts given the history of CEE-based HRT and other SERMs, all of which have shown to give rise to potentially life-threatening disorders.

The Horses

Life for the PMU mares is harsh.

The mares are repeatedly impregnated, on average of 12 years, and spend 6 months of their 11-month pregnancy confined to stalls so small they have difficulty turning around or lying down. Most of this time is spent standing up on cold concrete floors.

During this time, they are permanently attached to cumbersome rubber urine collection bags hanging between their hind legs that chafe their flanks, cause infections and severely limit movement.

In the past, the fate of the foals – the "by-products" of the industry – and the mares who could not conceive was bleak. Most were sold at auction to "kill buyers" and ultimately ended up at the slaughterhouse.

This dreadful fate may no longer apply to the foals. Pfizer's source of pregnant mare's urine (PMU) falls wholly under the auspices of NAERIC (North American Equine Ranching Information Council created in 1995) who claim the allegations of inhumane treatment of horses in PMU ranching are unfounded.

With a much smaller population of horses than in the halcyon days, where upwards of 400 PMU farms existed compared to the current 24, they maintain that the improved and much smaller breeding programs produce "high-quality" foals that are in great demand. Moreover, due to these cutbacks over time, there are no longer a particularly large glut of mares and foals that are sent to auction.

Nonetheless, in the end, it is likely the spent mares still end up in the slaughter pipeline. Whatever the case, there is little need for this industry given the strides in drug development that have taken place since Premarin was introduced to the market in 1942.

Although Pfizer has significantly downsized the number of PMU farming operations in North America (currently only 24 farms situated in Manitoba and Saskatchewan, Canada), Pfizer's annual sales for the Premarin® family of drugs in 2017 were close to \$1 billion USD.

Finally, what was once compelling evidence that many of these facilities moved to other parts of the world has since been confirmed – a thriving PMU industry has existed in China for at least 16 years. There is also evidence to suggest that such farms are situated in other countries such as India, for example.

What was and is today a cruel industry in the ill-fated treatment of the pregnant mares and their foals in North America will prove to be even more devastating for them in countries seemingly more accepting of animal abuse, horse slaughter and the consumption of the meat from these heinous practices.

Please Refuse to Prescribe Premarin®, Prempro® and Duavee®.

Choosing plant-derived or synthetic estrogen or adopting dietary changes and exercise programs designed to alleviate menopausal symptoms can save the lives of both women and horses.

Please talk to your patients regarding alternatives to these CEE-based hormone replacement therapies. There are much safer and more humane treatment options available. The choice of a drug should no longer come down to which is most effective—but what is safest.

While women can choose to engage in a regimen of CEE-based therapy, unfortunately the mares and their foals have no voice and are at the mercy of the pharmaceutical industry. This is where you can make a difference. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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